

**Glossary of Jewish Terms**  
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Key Terms (taken from Flesher, Paul V. M., and Bruce Chilton. *The Targums: A Critical Introduction*. Waco, TX: Baylor University Press; 2011).

**dibbur**—meaning God’s “utterance” in Hebrew is typical of the Amoraic period and is a variant of the term *memra* or “word.” The emergence of this alternative appears to be more limited, perhaps deliberately so, characteristically to matters related to the temple and the Torah.

**logos**—in Greek philosophy and religion means “word,” but not simply in the sense of a set of syllables. Rather, a *logos* is the meaning or reason behind a word. In English, its inclusion of logic is manifest in the “logy” ending of terms such as “theology,” “psychology,” and “anthropology.”

**Mahzorim**—a mahzor is a prayer book used for the cycle of the greatest holidays in Judaism. Some festival prayer books contain readings from the Targums and are comparable for that reason to some Fragment Targum manuscripts.

**masorah**—a masorah is a systematic compilation of critical notes, to help ensure the biblical text was accurately copied. The aim was to preserve the unusual readings in Scripture and to ensure that they were not eliminated as mistakes. A masorah was also devised to Targum Onqelos.

**Masoretic Text, Masorettes**—the Hebrew Bible was the object of special care in transmission, so that the authoritative text, set out with two masorahs, is known as the Masoretic Text. The medieval scholars who developed the Masoretic Text are called the Masorettes.

**memra**—may also relate to *logos* in Greek, and in addition to focusing on the intent in the act of speaking, it especially refers to the act of God in commanding, and human response to the act.

**meturgeman**, pl. meturgemanin—the Aramaic term meaning “translator.” It is used in rabbinic texts to indicate a person who translates during the synagogue service. It also refers to those who produced the Targums, both at the oral and written phases. By contrast, the term “Targumist” refers to someone who studies a Targum, although meturgeman and “Targumist” are used interchangeably by some scholars.

**midrash**, pl. midrashim—derived from the verb *darash*, which means “interpret.” The noun in singular and plural specifically relates to inquiry into the meaning of Scripture. Although the form of presentation is often referred to as commentary, the investigation is better described as a correlation between the written Torah and the Oral Torah.

**Mishnah**—refers etymologically to something repeated, from the Hebrew verb *shanah*. Rabbis conveyed their teaching in the form of oral saying that could be memorized (i.e., repeated). At approximately 200 CE the rabbinic movement published an authoritative

anthology of these called “the Mishnah.” The Mishnah is divided into six divisions, or orders, each of which contains a number of tractates.

**Talmud**—a commentary on the Mishnah. The Palestinian or Jerusalem Talmud began *ca.* AD 400, covered thirty-nine of the sixty tractates of the Mishnah. The Babylonian Talmud began *ca.* AD 600, covered thirty-seven of the sixty-two Mishnah tractates.

**targum**, pl. targumim—in Aramaic, literally a “translation,” whether oral or written. This book defines a Targum as: a translation that combines a highly literal rendering of the original text with material added into the translation in a seamless manner. It can refer to the Aramaic sections of Ezra and Daniel.